

## Forsaken Lake Haibun, 2024

*Subtle oasis—  
Inland sea on desert plains  
makes clouds to bring rain.*

There's a jumble of strip mall cinderblock boxes and asphalt parking lots named "The Meadows," by the freeway. Another swath of concrete further down the road is called "Green Fields."

Placenames inscribed on monument signs amid directionless growth are epitaphs—scraps of poetry that gesture toward what was there before.

Shambling down a path—a species in freefall—time goes swiftly. It seems we can't stop ourselves. Hubris to call it progress.

What if we are incapable of fully appreciating before an end is reached? How will we mark its mortally tender passing?

We mourn to the extent we loved. Feel loss to the degree we cared.

Can we continue calling the town *Salt Lake City*? In the smoky winds full of arsenic dust, perhaps we should rename it *Forsaken Lake*.

A twilight between eternity and nothing. Of course, deep wisdom remains, long after us. Bound together in a dream, let's cease chipping away, taking more than we give.

Let us raise gardens, balcony by balcony and park by park, to help a butterfly or bird. Let us preserve restful shade and shelter. Let's not accept the world dying. Let us re-wild.

*Like water grinding  
rock into sand with dull force—  
grief will finish us.*